



# The Third Chapter: Passion, Risk, and Adventure in the 25 Years After 50

*Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot*

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"We must develop a compelling vision of later life: one that does not assume a trajectory of decline after fifty, but one that recognizes it as a time of change, grown, and new learning; a time when 'our courage gives us hope.'" ?from *The Third Chapter*

At a key moment in the twenty-first century, demographers are recognizing the significance of a distinct developmental phase: those years following early adulthood and middle age when we are "neither young nor old." Whether by choice or not, many in their "third chapters" are finding ways to adapt, explore, and channel their energies, skills, and passions in new ways and into new areas.

It's this process of creative reinvention that the renowned sociologist Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot details in *The Third Chapter*, which redefines our views about the casualties and opportunities of aging. She challenges the still-prevailing and anachronistic images of aging by documenting and revealing how the years between fifty and seventy-five may, in fact, be the most transformative and generative time in our lives, tracing the ways in which wisdom, experience, and new learning inspire individual growth and cultural transformation.

*The Third Chapter* is not a how-to guide but a fascinating work of sociology, full of passionate and poignant stories of risk and vulnerability, failure and resilience, challenge and mastery, experimentation and improvisation, and insight and new learning. These stories reveal a whole world of learning and discovery awaiting those who want it. In *The Third Chapter*, Lawrence-Lightfoot captures a new moment in history and offers us a book rich with insight and hope about our endless capacity for change and growth.

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